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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Permanent Legislation

This Act, known as Public Law 396 of the 79th Congress, authorizes Congress to appropriate funds for a permanent School Lunch Program by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. For the past 11 years the Department has administered a similar program on a year-to-year basis. The funds will be used to assist States in "the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of nonprofit school lunch programs." The money will be given as grants-in-aid to States to reimburse schools for food and equipment purchases.

Appropriation

For the year 1946-47 Congress has appropriated \$75 million of which \$10 million are earmarked for equipment. The money will be apportioned to the States according to the number of children between the ages of 5 to 17, inclusive, enrolled in school and the per capita income of the States as related to that of the United States.

Matching Requirement

The law requires that the Federal funds accepted by a State be matched dollar for dollar until 1951. At that time, and until 1955, the State contribution must be increased to \$1.50 for every Federal dollar. After that the State must provide \$3.00 for \$1.00 from the Federal Government. However, in the case of a State whose per capita income is less than that of the U.S., the matching required for a fiscal year may be decreased by the percentage which the State per capita income is below that of the per capita U.S. income.

Eligibility

Nonprofit school lunch programs in both public and nonprofit private schools are eligible for Federal assistance. Application is made to the State Department of Education or other State agency designated by the Governor. In States that cannot disburse Federal funds to nonprofit private schools, the State PMA office will handle their applications.

Operating Requirements

Schools enter into a contract with the State agency and agree to meet certain requirements in the operation of the program. The lunch must be available to all children in the school regardless of their ability to pay, and without discrimination.

Reimbursement is made to the school according to the type of lunch served and the number of children participating in the program. The meals of teachers, employees, or other adults eating in the school are not included in the calculation for reimbursement.

Reimbursement for Food

The school that has entered into an agreement purchases food locally and then makes a claim for the allowable amount of money. The maximum rate of reimbursement is 9 cents for the Type A or complete lunch. If the school does not have the facilities to prepare and serve a complete meal it may contract to serve the Type B lunch which is less adequate nutritionally. In this case the maximum reimbursement is 6 cents a lunch. The Type C, which consists of only one-half pint of whole milk as a beverage, may be chosen by schools that have no lunchroom facilities at all. The rate of reimbursement is 2 cents.

Reimbursement for Equipment

Schools needing aid in the purchase of equipment for the preparation, storing, and serving of food for the lunch program should write to the State agency for an application for this purpose. Assistance in the purchase of equipment may be had whether or not money for food has been received. However, the school must agree to meet all operating requirements such as serving an A or B lunch, providing the lunch for all of the children regardless of their ability to pay, and using foods that are designated as abundant. The application must be approved prior to purchase if reimbursement is to be made. The amount of money finally approved may be for the anticipated cost of the equipment or it may be for a part of it, depending on the circumstances and the degree of need.

Expenditures by the School

The school with the help of the community provides for the payment of all other expenditures necessary for the operation of the program. Sometimes the income is derived from local and State taxes and more often from contributions made by individuals and civic groups. Services as well as money are donated to school lunch programs. Since the program need not provide a lunch free of charge to be eligible for Federal assistance, a small amount may be charged the children as long as those who are unable to pay the full charge are not prohibited from participating in the program. The money derived from these various sources may be counted toward matching the Federal funds, which the law requires. A reasonable value may be put on goods and services that are donated to the program, exclusive of commodities which have come from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Foods Distributed by the USDA

From time to time the Department of Agriculture will have foods available through its direct distribution programs. Schools will be given an opportunity to request these foods for use in their lunch programs. Schools may or may not receive cash assistance in order to be eligible for these commodities. They may be preserved for future use in school lunches or served as soon as received.

Reports and Records

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program submit a monthly report of operations on a simple form. They also make a claim for the funds to which they are entitled and send this to the State agency at the same time that the report is due. Records of food purchases, inventories, and other pertinent information must be kept at the school in support of the reports. Such records are in the interest of a businesslike operation.